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Fondée en 1974, MIND (Moving In New Directions) est une école secondaire alternative de la Commission des écoles protestante du Grand Montréal. Il s'agit d'une petite école qui, en plus des cours obligatoires, demande à chaque élève de poursuivre un projet individuel et de passer le plus de temps possible dans des activités d'apprentissage autonomes; les décisions y sont prises en commun par les élèves, les parents et les enseignants. Les objectifs de ce rapport d'évaluation sont: 1. de déterminer la crédibilité et l'efficacité de l'école MIND afin de la relever du statut d'école expérimentale; 2. d'identifier les besoins à rencontrer; 3. de suggérer des modifications au programme pour suivre l'évolution des besoins; 4. de fournir un modèle d'évaluation pour les écoles alternatives.

Afin d'étudier les résultats scolaires, les programmes et les expériences des gens impliqués, diverses méthodes ont été utilisées: 1. l'observation informelle des classes et des activités; 2. des entrevues avec tous les enseignants, certains élèves et parents et des membres du personnel de la CEPGM; 3. des entretiens téléphoniques avec treize anciens élèves; 4. un examen comparatif des résultats scolaires avec ceux d'autres écoles secondaires de la CEPGM; 5. des questionnaires distribués aux 95 élèves impliqués (complétés par 71 d'entre eux), postés aux 95 parents (56 réponses), à 50 anciens étudiants (15 réponses), à des principaux, des conseillers d'orientation, des gens du milieu et des membres du personnel de la CEPGM.

Les élèves de l'école MIND proviennent de presque toutes les autres écoles secondaires de la CEPGM; une moitié est constituée d'élèves brillants attirés par l'autonomie du programme et l'autre moitié est formée d'élèves peu motivés par l'école et la participation. La réputation de l'école est excellente auprès des gens qui sont en contact avec elle, alors qu'elle est douteuse auprès des gens qui ne la connaissent pas. Les résultats scolaires ont été moyens, comparés aux autres écoles, au cours des deux premières années, mais ont baissé au cours de la troisième année avec la venue d'élèves moins motivés; ceux qui y sont passés semblent réussir plus facilement au cégep. La

croissance personnelle et sociale des élèves est cependant la meilleure réussite de l'école. Diverses recommandations sont formulées.

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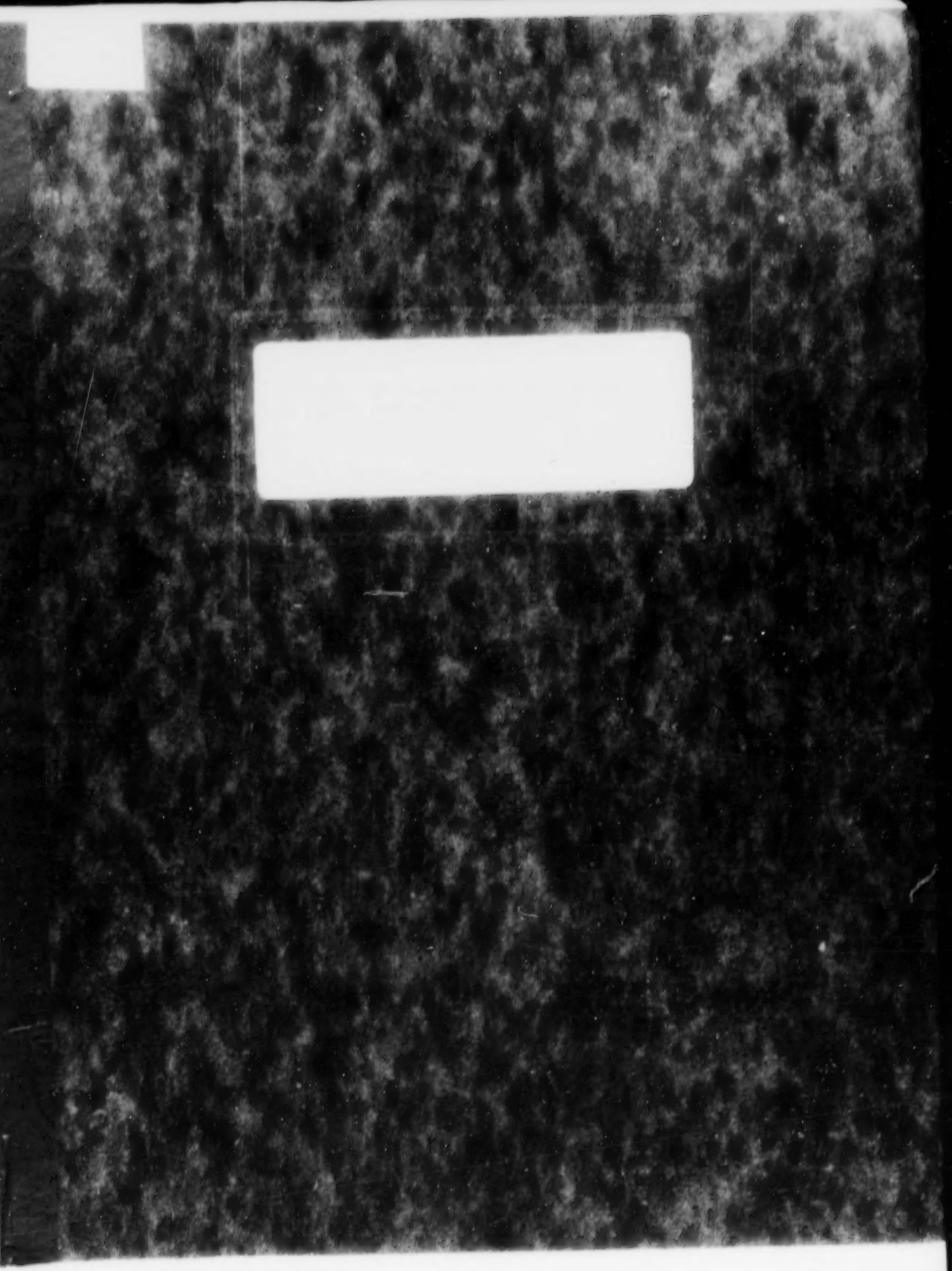

EDUQ 8470369

MIND

AN ASSESSMENT OF AN ALTERNATIVE PUBLIC HIGH SCHOOL

SPRING — 1979

SPONSORED BY
CONSEIL SCOLAIRE DE I'LLE DE MONTREAL

CONDUCTED WITH THE ASSISTANCE OF

SIR GEORGE WILLIAMS CENTRE FOR
HUMAN RELATIONS AND COMMUNITY STUDIES

CONCORDIA UNIVERSITY

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CONTENTS

Assessment Objectives 3

Background of the Study 3

MIND School

History and Goals 4

Unique Program Features 5

Assessment Study

Orientation 10

Method of Gathering Data 11

Sampling and Procedures 11

Study Limitations 12

Results

Students (A) 13

Former Students (B) 19

Parents (C) 23

Parents of Former Students (D) 32

Teachers (E) 38

School Board and Related Community People (F) 41

Student Achievement 44

Analysis and Interpretation of Results 47

Next Steps in Planning 53

Consultant's Comments 55

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OBJECTIVES OF THE MIND ASSESSMENT STUDY

1. To determine the degree of MIND's credibility and effectiveness as an educational institution in order to no longer be classified as an experimental school.

2. To identify the needs of the community (students, staff, and parents) that MIND serves.

3. To suggest program changes to meet evolving needs.

4. To provide a model of evaluation for alternative schools.

Background of the Study

As the school, MIND (Moving In New Directions), entered its forth year as the alternative high school of the Protestant School Board of Greater Montreal (P.S.B.G.M.) it seemed to be time to evaluate and record the school's program. MIND had evolved into an established educational institution but felt it needed to constantly justify its existence. A study to provide a public record and accounting was planned and funds to finance outside resources were applied for from the Conseil Scolaire de I'lle de Montreal (Island Council).

It was also hoped that the study report would describe the operation of the school, its weaknesses and strengths, and thus serve as a valuable reference for people interested in a co-management, independent study model of an alternative high school. And further information on the school would be helpful in interpreting it to potential students, parents, and school board personnel.

MIND SCHOOL

An Alternative High School is Born.

In the fall of 1974, the Protestant School Board of Greater Montreal, acting on a recommendation from the High School of Montreal, constituted an Alternative Education Coordinating Committee with commissioner John Gardner as chairperson. A working committee was put together composed of students, teachers and parents as well as several school board (P.S.B.G.M.) personnel. Gene Mulcahy, Director of the Shanti School in Hartford, Connecticut, was invited to Montreal to describe his alternative school to the working committee and explain its basic concepts and operating style. His model of alternative education had considerable influence on the development of MIND.

Following a considerable number of meetings and the exploration of alternative school resources (including visits to the Shanti School in Hartford, and three alternative type schools in Toronto) the working committee made a proposal for the founding of an alternative school based on the following concepts :

1. It would be a small school (125), operate within the per capita costs of the board, and be open to all students of high school age.

2. While the school will provide compulsory core courses each student will develop an individual project and be expected to spend as much time as possible in self-directed learning activities.

3. An emphasis will be placed on creating a strong community where each individual belongs and where all decisions are made jointly by students, parents and teachers.

4. The school should utilize the material and human resources of the Montreal community : schools, businesses, museums, community serving organizations, etc.

The proposal for the new alternative school (to be named by the students and staff) was accepted and arrangements were made to start the school in September, 1975. A downtown type of location was chosen using rented space from the YMCA on Park Avenue.

The Unique Features of MIND School.

As an alternative school MIND has many unique features which are related to its goals. It is important to understand these features and the program objectives they support in order to evaluate MIND in its context.

Co-Management

Decision making at MIND involves students, parents and teachers all with voice and vote equally. This is an educational experience and is seen as a political right. Students also participate in determining course content in the classroom, evaluation procedures and attendance requirements, if any.

Teacher-Student Relationships

Teachers and students at MIND are addressed by their first names, relationships are informal and continue out of class times. Many teachers and students become "friends". This informal atmosphere and friendship oriented relationships component carries over to become a major dimension of the MIND community. Students also participate in hiring and evaluating teachers.

Self-directed Study

Students decide what courses to take and whether or not to attend regular structured classes. They may work out self-directed activities with teachers to meet course expectations. Thus, students may design their own curriculum and determine the way they will work on it.

Timetable - shorter Class Hours and Flexibility

Regular classes are either twice a week for 90 minutes or three times a week for an hours. This gives students fewer class hours than a conventional school and enables them to work outside the school on self-directed projects. There is more flexibility in the schedule which may also facilitate self-directed study. Consequently, not all students come to school each day or stay for the whole day when they do come.

Special Group Projects

Each year students participate in two group or individual projects each lasting for at least two weeks (classes are cancelled for the two weeks to facilitate projects). Some of the recent projects have included :

- Journalism
- cooking
- T'ai Chi (martial arts)
- a bicycle tour
- family care
- theatre studies
- investigation of crisis centres in Montreal
- exploration of gaming techniques and creating simulation
- working with a lawyer, in a hospital or business office
- a trip to Columbia, South America.

Montreal Community Orientation

The school is located in a downtown type area to facilitate the students interacting with a wide variety of other people and "real life" experiences. There is a focus in using other schools to provide courses not available at MIND and using other agencies, facilities and activities as part of the educational resources and curriculum.

School Facilites

MIND is the only school in Montreal that does not use a building designed as a school for its operation. MIND is located in the International YMCA and uses converted residence rooms on the third floor. The rooms are all small in size (less than half the size of a regular classroom) and there are few of the usual high school features such as lockers, cafeteria, and teachers room. The building is shared with a variety of other people using the Y facilities and at night the classrooms are used by the adult education program of the Y. The Y location is in the middle of a rich ethnic community through which many new Canadians pass on coming to Montreal.

School and Class Size

MIND is limited to 125 students which makes it possible for all students to know each other (and the staff) and to form a school community where everyone can be known and treated as an individual. More individual attention is gained through the informal student-staff relations, the self-directed study guided by a resource person and the small size of classes. While MIND operates with the same student-teacher ratio as the rest of the P.S.B.G.M. system its reduced timetable and self-directed study made the regular structured classes much smaller than at conventiond high schools.

A Role for Parents

Parents are encouraged to join in the co-management of the school through participation in the decision making meetings of the school (community meetings, the coordinating council, and the provincially required school committee). They are also asked to join task forces, lead student groups, and serve as a resource person in areas of their expertise. Contact with teachers about their student's progress is expected to be frequent, personal, and informal.

Description to Students

MIND is a school where you can :

1. make the process of learning as important as the content
2. create and change courses and the way they are taught
3. develop group responsibility and community awareness
4. learn to make your own decisions and live with them
5. learn self-discipline and motivation
6. actively participate in the running of the school
7. pursue your own interests
8. evaluate yourself, your courses and your school
9. be friends with the students and staff.

Typical Timetables of Students and Teachers

Mike - Grade 10

Registered in French, English, Drama and Math.

6 hrs. scheduled class time
2 hrs. individual work, homework
1 hr. community meeting
1 hr. coordinating committee
2 - 3 hrs. home group

Total 12 - 13 hours per week

Jennifer - Grade 10

Registered in Canadien history (in French), Math, English, Chemistry, Biology and French.

15 hrs. scheduled class time
3 hrs. individual work, homework
4 hrs. task forces
1 hr. community meetings
1 hr. home group
1 hr. coordinating committee

Total 25 hours per week.

Francoise - teacher

18 hrs. class time
3 hrs. office time
2 hrs. staff meeting
1.5 hr. home group
1 hr. community meeting
1 hr. evening meetings (community)
3 hrs. coordinating committee and task forces
1 hr. miscelaneous

Total 30.5 hours per week.

Summary of varied learning modes at MIND

a) Regular structured classes - all students take courses from a range of usual high schools options offered by the P.S.B.G.M. The courses lead to a Quebec high school leaving certificate and entrance into CEGEP.

b) Independent study - the student works alone on regular courses or special interests with the guidance of a teacher or resource person.

c) Special projects - twice a year the student selects a group or individual project to persue for at least a two week period. Many of these projects take place outside the school.

d) Home group - all students belong to a home group which meets once a week for the balance of the term. They are the units for the special projects (c above) but also may have a social focus.

e) One to one - students meet individually with teachers around special interests or projects, vocational or social concerns, or personal problems.

f) Special activities - MIND has a number of seminars, field trips, guest speakers, film presentations, parties, etc. and students are free to attend. These vary in size from a few students to the entire school.

g) Task forces - at any time there are usually two or three task forces in operation around school concerns such as school evaluation, student selection. This school evaluation task force had ten student members.

h) Co-management activities - students participate at all levels of the school operation and decision making, and thus attend community meetings, coordinating council, and school committee meetings.

THE EVALUATION STUDY

The evaluation model

MIND is an alternative school - its goals and objectives in providing an alternative to conventional high schools are therefore somewhat different. And its process (methods and procedures) of meeting these goals are in sharp contrast to conventional schools. Thus, the evaluation of an alternative school benefits most from a goal based model of evaluation that focusses on its unique goals.

Goal based evaluation was poineered by Stufflebeam with his CIPP model[1], and developed further by Alkin with his CES model[2], Provus with his discrepancy model [3] and Stake with his countenance model[4]. Dimock has built on the goal based model with the development and five year study of his Systems Improvement Research model[5]. All of these goal based models have three things in common which differentiate them from the traditional before and after experimental model with its control groups.

1. They assume that innovative programs differ from conventional programs in significant ways and should be evaluated in terms of their goals and not the goals of the conventional program.

2. They focus considerably on process evaluation - identifying elements in the instructional program that are not being implemented as they were originally conceived.

3. And they are formative as well as summative in their focus. This means that the evaluation assesses weaknesses and strengths of the program rather than giving a straight value judgement such as poor, good, or excellent. The evaluation is viewed as a total assessment process that will enable the program to improve its performance and do a more effective job of achieving its objectives. It is part of a continuous process of improvement and not an end in itself.

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1. D. Stuffelbeam and others, Educational Evaluation and Decision Making, Itasca, Ill. : Peacock, 1971.
2. M. Alkin, "Evaluation theory development", Evaluation Comment, 2 (No. 1), 1969.
3. M. Provus, Discrepancy Evaluation, Berkeley, Ca.: McCutchan, 1971.
4. R. Stake, "The Countenance of educational evaluation", Teachers College Record, 68 : 523-40, 1967.
5. H. Dimock, A Simplified Guide to Program Evaluation, Montreal, Que.: Concordia University, 1979.

Method

Three major areas were studied in this assessment :

1. academic achievement of MIND students.
2. the schools program and operation (focussing on the process of education).
3. experiences of people (staff, students, parents, school board) with MIND's program including reputation ratings.

The procedures used to collect relevant data included :

a) observation - informal observations of school classes, activities, and physical set up.
b) interviews - all teachers were interviewed, several students and parents, and four senior P.S.B.G.M. personnel.
c) telephone interviews - conducted with 13 former students
d) records and reports - matriculation results with breakdown of all classes compared to all other P.S.B.G.M. high schools, minutes of planning groups for the formation of the school, and numerous school documents and reports.
e) questionnaires(distributed) - to all 95 to 100 students attending MIND with special sessions organized to complete them gained 71 completed questionnaires.

Questionnaires (mailed) - mailed two copies with covering letter to 95 households with addressed, stamped return envelope. This was followed up with phone call reminders, and additional copies distributed at two parent meetings (including graduation). 72 parents responded representing 53 households and 56 students.

Mailed 50 questionnaires with return stamped envelopes to a random sample of former students and received 15 replies.

Mailed questionnaires with covering letter and return stamped envelope following a personal invitation to participate to a selected sample of 12 principals and 12 guidance counselors. 4 principals and 7 guidance counselors replied.

Mailed questionnaires with covering letter and return, stamped envelopes to 9 community people and 9 P.S.B.G.M. school board personnel. 2 community people and 1 school board person replied.

Limitations of the study

The size of the samples in this study are somewhat below those projected (MIND is a very small school and many students and parents are not "into" answering focussed questions). However, the consistency of the data profile remained high with all the groups which means that adding on additional people to the sample would not likely change the pattern of the profiles.

The short duration of the study - four months - eliminated the possibility of looking at patterns of change within the students' personal, social and academic development and any trends in educational programming within the school. A few school documents did give some perspective on these latter areas as did reports from former students.

It would also have been helpful to have more comparisons with conventional high schools. Data is presented on a comparative basis for academic achievement yet it would have been useful to have similar data on parent and student satisfaction, student success in work and CEGEPs, and comparative data on students personal and social development.

RESULTS

A

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MIND Students Questionnaire - Summary

71 Returns (out of 95 to 105 students) Male - 28 Female - 43

1. Home School in not at MIND

22 schools in the Montreal area mentioned :

Westmount	- 11	Verdun	- 4
Westhill	- 9	Montreal H.S.	- 2
Lasalle	- 6	Montreal West	- 2
Mount Royal	- 6	Malcolm Campbell	- 2
Outremont	- 4	Wagar	- 2

2. How were your Grades before coming to MIND ?

very high grades	13%	average grades	34%
quite high grades	27%	not doing very well	26%

3. Major Areas of Learning at MIND

Academic - 45 Social - 47 Vocational - 6

4. Were you :

expelled from other school	- 0	a failure	- 6
own choice drop-out	- 14	referred to MIND	- 10
behavior problem or misfit	- 6	no response	- 4
achieving at average or above level	- 38		

5. Major Strengths of MIND

The main strengths centered on "opportunity to learn in a self directed way", "at your own speed" in an "informal relaxed atmosphere". The sense of "self-discipline" and "responsibility" and "small class size" were mentioned many times.

The relationship between teachers and students was hilited - "a few very good teachers", "teachers not on a pedestal", "teachers trying their best", "strong relationships", communication.

"Student unity" and "student energy" was another theme. "Works well together socially", "a big family".

6. Major Weaknesses at MIND

The major area students talked to as a weakness was the "general apathy" that seemed to be permeating the school. The 'involvement of the community was weakening' due to 'lack of participation' and discipline, 'people expecting things done for them'. Because 'students are here for different reasons', they 'take advantage of the system', and 'nothing works out'. A main weakness is that 'most students aren't trying'.

The second area hilited was "the difficulty with community meetings". "Students and staff 'are not well organized to run a school", "more strength needed in enforcing rules", "wishey washiness leads to disorganization".

Decision - carrying out no good "school too unorganized".

The third area concerns academic work : "grades are not high". "Students given too much power and skip classes, don't do work", "not enough subjects to get where I want to go", "academic side lost temporarily".

7. How did you hear about MIND ?

Students from MIND	- 25	people who'd heard of MIND	- 10
contacts in home school (teachers, guidance counsellor, etc.	- 13	media, (TV, radio, papers)	- 9
MIND people came to school	- 5	in school media	- 3

Comments : Very positive remarks were heard about the school as students considered coming. The most attractive features of MIND were the friendly relations (including staff) and the freedom offered. Self directed study and co-management were also mentioned as well as the need to leave the boring (hated) conventional school.

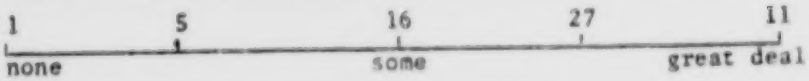
8. Why didn't your Friends come to MIND ?

Students reported their friends were happy where they were and doing o.k. or their parents wouldn't allow them. Or their friends feared self discipline, didn't know enough about the school, or the waiting list was too long. A few had heard the school was for flunkies and drop-outs.

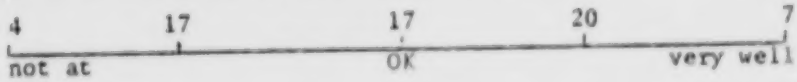
9. Why do Students leave MIND before the End of the Year ?

Can't cope with self discipline, not mature and responsible	- 40
MIND is not what they expected and they don't like it	- 10
Don't fit into academic philosophy - need structure	- 9
Have a hard time, lonely	- 4
Were asked to leave	- 4

10. How much does MIND challenge you and maximize your Learning Potential ?



11. How well do you think MIND makes Use of Community Resources ?

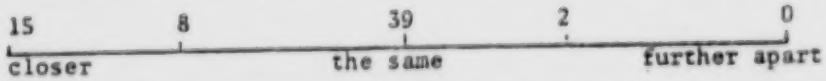


12. What does the School contribute to the Community ?

No response - 30% Nothing or very little - 30%

Others said rummage sales, plays, good students, money, "bagels consumation", "shows the community that a school can get along with a great deal of freedom", etc.

13. Has your Relationship with Parents changed since attending MIND ?



14. What Kind of Students go to MIND ?

Slow learners	- 10%	expelled or behavior problems	- 11%
average students	- 16%	drop-outs	- 11%
hi motivated	- 13%	very bright students	- 13%
self-directed learners	- 14%	students escaping hard work	- 13%

15. Who should go to MIND ?

The major theme was highly motivated and self directed students who "can contribute to the community" and are "responsible, mature and organized". The minor theme was "all kinds and anyone".

16. Should MIND select Students or take First Come - First Served ?

80% of the responses indicated some selection or screening.
20% said first come - first served or anyone.

17. What Educational Experiences are you having at MIND that are not available at other High Schools ?

Group studies, working at own pace . . . . . - 10
friendship with teachers, more attention . . . . . - 9
trips and community meetings . . . . . - 6
personal growth, learning to get along with people . . - 10
how to be independent, more responsible organized . . . - 5
outside projects and work experience . . . . . - 2

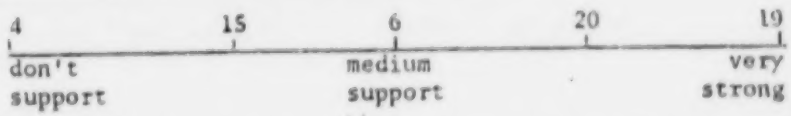
18. As a MIND Student how satisfied are you with

Academic learning	5 dis-satisfied	5	21 fairly satisfied	21	13 very satisfied
personal and social growth	1 dis-satisfied	1	14 fairly satisfied	14	37 very satisfied
preparation for the future	3 dis-satisfied	6	17 fairly satisfied	17	23 very satisfied
success in CEGEP	15 easier time	12	26 same	5	2 harder time
getting a job	8 easier	11	40 same	3	0 harder
MIND's flexible timetable	0 dis-satisfied	0	10 fairly satisfied	10	50 very satisfied
reduced class time at MIND	2 dis-satisfied	2	12 fairly satisfied	16	37 very satisfied
permissive approach at MIND	2 dis-satisfied	7	18 fairly satisfied	13	22 very satisfied

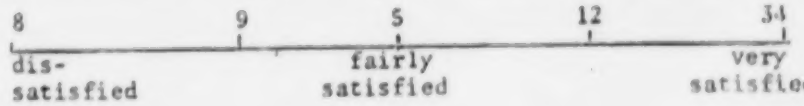
19. Comment on how MIND reports your Progress to you (or your parents)

Over half didn't comment, the other said "OK", "fairly", "I'd like more written comments", "more frequent progress reports" and "some teachers mark you rather than your work". Generally positive comments.

20. How strongly do your Parents support your attending MIND ?



21. Satisfaction with cancelled Classes for Special Projects twice a Year ?



22. How competent do you think the Teachers are at MIND ?

More competent than other H.S. teachers - 37 same - 12 less - 2

23. Drug Usage at MIND compared to Conventional High Schools is :

More - 7 the same - 33 less - 25

Comments on how Drug Usage effects you :

Most said it didn't effect them (N = 41) other said it didn't bother them, and a few mentioned it was a problem and should not allow dopers at MIND.

24. Male-Female Relationships at MIND are likely :

More responsible and mature than at other schools. . . . . - 21
more likely to include promiscuous heterosexual activities . . . . . - 6
more likely to include homosexual (gay) relationships . . . . . - 5
about the same range and intensity as other schools . . . . . - 37

Comments : "People are closer, more open and affectionate" was a major theme, including there are "lots of close relationships" and "makes me grow up more and learn what a good relationship is all about". Others commented that it had no more effect here than at other schools.

25. Comments on the Consistency of the School in applying its Rules

Positive comments on the consistency outnumbered negative 4 to 1. Typical of neutral or negative comments were : "we're great at making rules, enforcing them is another story", "rules need improving", "there is a continuous attempt to abide by them".

26. Comments on Consistency of Staff in enforcing Rules

No themes appeared here and there were as many comments for as against. "Some are good, others leave a lot to be desired".

27. Suggestions for improving MIND

Minor themes included screening or selecting students, more and different courses and activities, and more and better facilities and resources. More rules, respect, and consistent enforcement was mentioned. And one student suggested "closing down for a year to think things over".

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FORMER STUDENTS - SUMMARY

Included in this sample are 28 former students. 15 (out of 50 approached) completed a mailed questionnaire. 13 consented to a phone interview (out of 17 approached).

Present Activity

Working - 4; Going to college or school - 18; Having fun, not working - 6.

Student Attraction to MIND

Most students went to MIND because they were unhappy in the conventional school and wanted to engage in the self directed approach. 60% left MIND by graduation, 15% by returning to another high school, and 15% were asked to leave. When they did leave, 30% went to another high school, 50% went on to CEGEP, and 15% took jobs. Over 80% have visited the school since leaving or participated in a school activity or task force.

Use of Community Resources by MIND

1	2	12	8	1
not at all	poorly	OK	fairly well	very well

The school's contribution to the community - operating an alternative program. 2 students mentioned the students community projects.

What Kind of Students go to MIND

	General	ME		General	ME
Slow learners	7%	2%	Expelled or behavior problems	11%	3%
Average students	17%	24%	Drop-outs	8%	2%
Hi motivated	14%	15%	Very bright	15%	22%
Self directed	14%	25%	Escaping hard work	15%	7%

The students who should go to MIND question received mixed responses with no single theme surfacing. Most mentioned serious, self directed, or responsible students interested in the MIND program.

Half of the students thought there should be student selection, the other half felt there should be no selection or self selection.

Strengths of MIND

Few areas were mentioned more than once. General areas reflected the group spirit and unique components of MIND (co-management, independent study, freedom, openness).

Weaknesses of MIND

Again no major themes. About 10% commented on the apathy and disinterest of students who came in the third year and another 10% on the misuse of the school's freedom.

Teachers

Over 90% said the MIND teachers were as or more competent than regular teachers (most said more competent).

Relationship with Parents

All but one student said their relationship with their parents had stayed the same or improved during their attendance at MIND.

60% reported strong support from their parents in attending MIND and 25% some support.

Educational Experiences at MIND not available at Conventional Schools

Quality of personal relationships (especially teachers)
Self directed study and self discipline
Smaller class size
Co-management of school
Field trips, special courses and events, and outside work experiences.

Satisfaction with Learnings

Academic	3	3	8	6	7
	dis-satisfied		fairly satisfied		very satisfied
Personal growth	1	1	5	7	13
	dis-satisfied		fairly satisfied		very satisfied
Preparation for future	3	0	3	10	9
	dis-satisfied		fairly satisfied		very satisfied

Satisfaction with Learnings - cont'd.

Succeeding in CEGEP	2	4	12	4	5
	harder		same		easier
Getting Job	2	2	15	6	1
	harder		same		easier
Preferred to attend conventional school	19	3	3	1	1
	no		undecided		yes

What did your Friends Think about you Going to MIND ?

28% positive responses - fantastic, impressed, jealous

31% negative responses - a big joke, school for dummies, for drop-outs, cop-outs.

School Operation

How flexible did you find the timetable	2	0	6	8	10
	not flexible		fairly		very flexible
Satisfaction with flexible timetable	2	0	6	4	13
	dis-satisfied		fairly satisfied		very satisfied
Satisfaction with student centered, co-management approach	3	2	11	4	5
	dis-satisfied		fairly satisfied		very satisfied
Level of permissiveness	0	2	14	4	3
	not enough		just right		too much
Satisfaction with reduced class time	1	0	6	6	13
	dis-satisfied		fairly satisfied		very satisfied
Satisfaction with cancelled classes for special two week projects	2	0	7	6	8
	dis-satisfied		fairly satisfied		very satisfied

Problems from Timetable or permissive Approach

30% said no problems and 20% didn't comment.
30% commented along the line that the timetable left blocks of unused time during the day and that was hard. Many students didn't use that time well because of the permissiveness.

Drugs and Sex

Drug usage at MIND : less - 2 same - 17 more - 5

Comments : Most students felt the drug usage was just a part of the MIND learning experience or mentioned it didn't affect them. 10% mentioned the cliques around drug use and the students being stoned in school.

Sexual activities were felt to be similar to other schools with the exception of more open display of affection at MIND. And the sexual activity, where commented on, was seen as positive, healthy and an opportunity to make real friends.

Consistency of School in applying Rules and Regulations

A pretty even balance between being good and consistent, and too slack.

Consistency of Staff in enforcing Rules

An even balance of comments.

Comments on Staff-Student Familiarity

Over 95% said great - closeness really beneficial.

What would have improved MIND

The only small theme was for more space, facilities and programs.

Other Comments

Over 90% of comments were about the rich learning experience MIND provided.

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MIND SCHOOL - PARENT QUESTIONNAIRE SUMMARY

1. Male - 27 Female - 45

4. Education of Parent responding

Graduate work	- 16	university degree	- 10
some university	- 18	high school, completed	- 13
grade 10 or less	- 11	no data	- 4

5. Community Meeting attended (Wednesday afternoon)

none	- 57
one	- 8
two	- 3
three	- 2
four or more	- 0

6. Committee Meetings attended (evenings)

none	- 35
one	- 8
two	- 9
three	- 12
four	- 8

7. Have you talked to a Class, Group, or worked on a Task Force at MIND since September ?

No - 55 Yes - 15 since Sept. 78

8. How well does MIND use your Resources ?

Not at all [29] Poorly [12] o.k. [13] pretty well [10] very well [1]

9. Mention what, if anything, you'd like to do more of to contribute to MIND

Provide industry experience. Don't know - 2. Provide guidance between pupils and teachers. Tutor math. Anything. Audio Visual. Physical and Mental Health. Discuss literature. Need more specific requests. Information too late. Contribute discipline. Nothing - 3. Go on field trips. Natural sciences. Orientation to John Abbott College. Group meetings. Organize their library. Physical education. Use parents to advise students in areas of special skills.

10. Considering how much you are now participating at MIND do you want to participate

More - 28 less - 2 about the same - 34

11. What helps and hinders your Participation in MIND Activities ?

Open door policy - 2. Interest in daughter's education. Evening meetings - 4. Opportunities - 2. Being asked. Receptiveness - 2. Not asked. People know me. Location. Newsletter. Applied Social Science studies. Wayne (a teacher).

Hinders Participation

Work days. - 3. Own work - 32. Taking courses - 2. Lack of structure and goals - 3. Unsure of impact. Distance - 5. Lack of time. Other children or grandmother at home - 4. No follow up. Too large community meetings (boring) - 2. Never approached. Need special task. Low student interest. Away during winter.

12. How well does the School make Use of Community Resources ?

Don't know [12]

2	10	15	19	4
not at all	poorly	OK	fairly well	very well

13. Contributes to Community

Don't know [19]

usual	- 1	work projects	- 1
model for PSBGM	- 1	an example	- 1
potential community workers	- 1		
freedom (too much)		free speech	

Receives from Community

Outside experience - 5 the usual - 2
ethnic appreciation - community affairs
opportunity for self expression

14. What kind of Students go to MIND

Slow learners	- 11	Expelled or behavior problems	- 26
average	- 31	drop-outs	- 17
hi motivators	- 33	very bright	- 37
self directed	- 51	excaping hard work	- 33

15. Your Student is

Slow learner	- 3	expelled or behavior problem	- 1
average	- 16	drop-out	- 1
hi motivator	- 25	very bright	- 35
self directed	- 51	escaping hard work	- 13

16. Who should go to MIND

Unhappy students		students not fitting elsewhere	
everyone	- 7	mixture	- 2
hi motivated/self direct.	- 21	average and above	- 2
self directed	- 5	life skill oriented	
all, but motivated	- 8	interested	
non-conformist		helpable	
self reliance oriented		free thinkers	
bright and motivated	- 3		

17. Why does your Student go to MIND

Unhappy students	- 15	atmosphere	- 3
non-conforming	- 9	flexibility of curriculum	- 2
behavior problem	- 2	intellectual atmosphere	
self direction	- 7	interested	
sibling attended		more activity	
opportunities	- 2	freedom	
small classes		doing poorly	
to avoid large high school		personal approach	
move at own speed		bored.	

18. Do you think MIND should select certain Students or allow anyone to come who wants to ?

All kinds of students	- 15	select certain students	- 48
too many duds	- 9	those with problems in straight school	
all motivated to learn and develop	- 2		
self directed and motivat.	- 1		

19. How many times since September 1978 have you talked to a MIND teacher about your student ?

not at all	- 12
once	- 11
twice	- 18
three times	- 8
four or more	- 19

20. Contact with Teachers

5	2	23	5	28
dis-satisfied		fairly satisfied		very satisfied

21. Comments about how the School reports your Student's Progress

No problems	- 3	o.k.	- 26
very satisfied	- 4	more frequent reports	- 2
good	- 11	honest	- 3
want written report	- 2	unsatisfied	
need more information		indifferent	
inaccurate		more data	- 7
confusing			

22. How competent do you think the Teachers are at MIND ?

37 more competent than teachers at conventional high schools

26 about the same as teachers at conventional high schools

1 less competent than teachers at conventional high schools.

23. Do you feel MIND has influenced your Relationship with your Son/Daughter since he/she started attending MIND ? Have you become closer or further apart ?

30	2	32	1	1
became closer		stayed the same		further apart

24. Experiences at MIND unavailable at other High Schools

Chance to meet varied students		self expression	
art classes		flexible time schedule	
human relation skills	- 11	life skills	- 3
student in government	- 11	teacher-student relations	- 10
own research	- 3	group projects	- 11
takes responsibility	- 4	group decisions	- 3
outside activities		select subjects	- 5
social life			

As a MIND Parent how satisfied are you with your Student's :

25. Academic Learnings

7	6	29	5	21
dis-satisfied		fairly satisfied		very satisfied

26. Personal and social growth

0	3	19	8	39
dis-satisfied		fairly satisfied		very satisfied

27. Preparation for the future

3	7	26	6	26
dis-satisfied		fairly satisfied		very satisfied

28. Easier to get into CEGEP

Don't know [27]

1	1	17	6	19
harder		same		easier

29. Easier to get Job

Don't know [27]

1	1	21	8	12
harder		same		easier

30. Prefer Conventional High School

44	12	11	3	1
no		undecided		yes

31. How strong is your Support for your Student attending MIND ?

0	0	18	13	39
no support		some		very strong

32. What do your Friends think about your Son/Daughter going to MIND ?

curious	- 5	not interested	- 5	skeptical	
contempt	- 6	interested	- 9	don't tell others	- 3
weirdos	- 3	surprise		for rejects	
admiration	- 9	oh		a joke	
unsure/no opinion	- 3	mixed reactions		impressed	- 1

33. How flexible do you find the timetable at MIND

1	1	23	6	39
not flexible		fairly flexible		very flexible

34. Satisfaction with Timetable

10	5	37	4	14
dis-satisfied		fairly satisfied		very satisfied

35. Satisfaction with Co-Management

8	6	26	7	20
dis-satisfied		fairly satisfied		very satisfied

36. Satisfaction with Freedom given at MIND

2	2	17	24	20
not enough		just right		too much

37. Satisfaction with Reduced Class Time

13	18	23	12	13
dis-satisfied		fairly satisfied		very satisfied

38. Satisfaction with Group Projects (taking up two weeks of classes)

7	3	16	10	35
dis-satisfied		fairly satisfied		very satisfied

39. Describe any Problems you've had related to the Timetable or permissive Approach.

None	- 23	too permissive (open)	- 8
hangs around too much	- 6	fellow dud student had to stay home	- 2
advance notice on cancelled classes	- 3	need more activity	
no challenge	- 5		

40. Drug Usage at MIND compared to other High Schools

More	- 7	same	- 32	less	- 19

41. Comments on Drug Usage

No problem - 7
less emphasis at MIND
positive influence
more group pressure
"stoned" for a month
was involved but came out of it better.
less usage now
no effect - 8
negative influence
no group pressure - 1
drug usage related to self awareness

42. Male-Female Relations at MIND compared to other High Schools

Display of open affection	more - 36	the same - 19	less - 0
Permiscuous petting and intercourse among MIND students	more - 3	the same - 31	less - 6
Homosexual activity	more - 0	the same - 23	less - 8

43. Comments on the Male-Female Relationships at MIND effect on your Student

Positive - 10
no problem - 6
not much effect
need to check on field trips
nothing special - 12
warmth and caring - 5

44. Comments on the School's Consistency in applying its Rules and Regulations

Do they understand consistency - 1
recognize the problem - 7
there is no consistency - 3
seems OK - 8
shaky leadership - 1
too lenient - 3
very consistent - 2

"Fall crisis logical outcome of school government - well handled."
seems consistent
falling down in applying rules
what rules and regulations (they're bent to suit everyone's fancy).
stress better study habits
too soft
very consistent
far too lax
need more consistency
lax in application of rules

45. Comments on Consistency of Staff in enforcing Rules

Need more consistency and teaching - 1
staff is scared/incompetent - 2
quite competent
very inconsistent
staff must call in if they cancel class
OK - 7
inconsistent - 4
too lax - 1
negligent at times
too soft

46. Comments on Familiarity between Staff and Students at MIND

Positive - 17
tremendous/super - 5
too much - 2
a major strength of MIND
more familiarity better
positive - 4
good
"some teachers are great (others not)"
leads to openness and honesty
staff co-apled - 2
loosing it because of rules hassle - 1
stop movement in and out of classroom
relations seem superficial
healthy

47. Suggestions for improving the Program or Facilities

Library
student lounge
counsellor
more art and music - 4
science lab
dance
more homework assigned
parents teach elective courses
lab facilities
leave parents out of government
training for staff in human relations
motivate students to participate in music programs at other high schools
use outside resources
social relations should be a school subject
"more discipline/order so MIND does not flaunder"
more rigor in English department.
weak French program "Recognize the French milieu in which we live"
more gym/sports - 3
current events
German
screen students
staff work harder
more courses - 2

48. Other Comments about what is like for you to have a Student at MIND

"Glad MIND was there when I needed it"
super fantastic
very pleased - 1
stop having 100% running everything
very satisfying and a relief to have son/daughter at MIND - 10
boring academic program
students have too much say in running the school
working at MIND is like an insane asylum - I couldn't stand it and teachers shouldn't stay too long.
"the school has destroyed more students than it's made"
community meetings are meaningless.
like MIND effect on daughter/son - 6
we all still have a lot to learn
"very exciting - it's drawn me into my son's activities"
happy kid at MIND

48. Other Comments about what is like for you to have a Student at MIND - cont'd.

"My daughter's overall attitudes to school and life are much more stable."
Plan to send future students.
"D. is not a self motivated student and staff seem to regard this as his affair only."
"I find there is little interest in preparing students for future."
"Seems to like the freedom."
"We have had three children at MIND. I feel very proud of all three. Of course, there were moments when I thought or expected more, but I'm certain that MIND was indeed a better experience for us all than regulard school."
New students aren't cooperative around MIND approach.
"The school and my students have added positively to my own growth and continued learning about people and education."
More positive use of free time.
It is a pleasure.

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PARENT QUESTIONNAIRE FOR FORMER STUDENTS

1. Male : 5 No data : 1 Female : 9 N = 15

2. 1 Student : 13 2 Students : 2

3. Length of Student's Time at MIND

less than 3 months	1	3 months - 1 yr.	3
1 - 2 years	9	over 2 years	0

4. Reason for Leaving MIND

doing poorly in studies and relations with teachers deteriorated
to attend another high school
9 = graduated
to work after graduation
lack of interest of other students and teachers
too much unstructured freedom
work too difficult and discouraging comments from teachers - 1
not enough stimulation
she decided she needed more discipline

5. Your Involvement with MIND

little or none : 3 a bit : 5 some : 5 a lot : 2

6. Use of Community Resources

not at all : 0 poorly : 3 OK : 4 fairly well : 7 very well : 1

7. Contribution of MIND to Community

2 = an alternative
teaches students awareness of community
not much
small but meaningful re projects
better understanding of students
9 = no comments

8. Kind of Students going to MIND

2 = slow learners	3%	6 = expelled or behavior problem	10%
8 = average	14%	4 = drop-outs	14%
9 = hi motivation	15%	9 = very bright	15%
11 = self directed	20%	8 = escapers	14%

Total = 57 responses

9. Your Student at MIND is :

1 = slow learner
5 = average
5 = hi motivated
11 = self directed
0 = expelled or behavior problem
0 = drop-outs
7 = very bright
2 = excaping hard work

Total = 31 responses

10. Who should go to MIND ?

all but escapers
3 = hi motivated and bright seekers of more scope for expression
2 = hi motivated
2 = non structured seekers
2 = self directed all who'd benefit

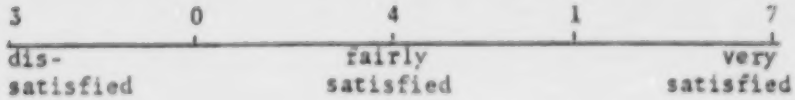
11. Why did your Student go ?

self directed
get education on own terms
more scope for expression
felt lost in numbers at Westmount High
bored at school
to do own thing
friends liked it there
advise of older sister from MIND
unhappy at conventional high school
non-acceptance of structured curriculum
relaxed atmosphere
dissatisfied at school
outside activities interested her
fed up with low teaching and behavior standards
fed up with structure and dull teachers

12. Should MIND select its Students ?

4 = anyone should go
9 = selection keep hi standards
anyone for trial period
self directed bright only

13. Satisfaction with Teacher Contact



14. Comments on Progress Reports from MIND

6 = OK or fine
intelligently presented
could have veen better informed
good interview system with student present
wanted better system
sloppy sociological double talk
personal interest of teacher appreciated
teachers not in touch this year.

15. MIND Teachers competent ?

more - 7 same - 7 less - 1

16. Did your Relationship Change with your Student since he/she started attending MIND

3	3	9	0	2
closer		same		apart

17. Unique Experiences provided at MIND

Self direction
larger community
smaller classes
how difficult democracy is
self sufficiency and responsibility
disappointment in staff and irresponsibility of peers
more self discovery
individual attention
self expression
community contact
participation in decision making
closer relation with teachers
2 = wider choice in courses
2 = private projects
personal involvement and awareness of others

Satisfaction with Learnings

18. Academic	4	1	8	1	2
	dis-satisfied		fairly satisfied		very satisfied
19. Personal and social	0	0	7	3	6
	dis-satisfied		fairly satisfied		very satisfied
20. Preparation for future	0	0	2	1	3
	dis-satisfied		fairly satisfied		very satisfied
21. CEGEP success	0	0	6	3	5
	harder		same		easier
22. Job success	0	0	9	2	2
	harder		same		easier

23. Preferred a Conventional High School ?

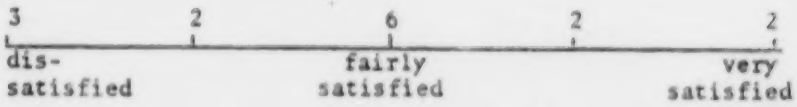
9	2	1	2	1
no		?		yes

24. What did your Friends think of MIND ?

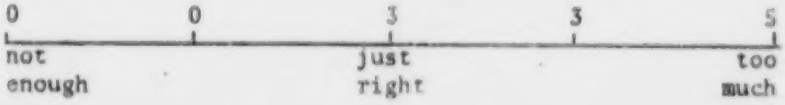
2 = no one agreed with MIND
didn't discuss it
drugs and drop-outs
too experimental

little interest in MIND
5 = very interested
approving
cop-out school

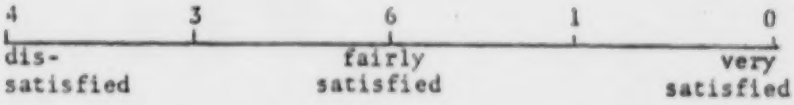
25. Co-Management (shared school government)



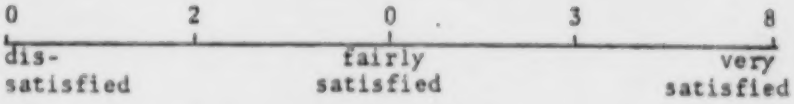
26. Permissiveness at MIND



27. Reduced School Time at MIND



28. Satisfaction with cancelled Classes twice a year for Special Projects



29. Any Problems related to the Timetable or Permissiveness ?

3 = no problems
2 = lack of direction
3 = should make more demands on students

day too short
teacher favoritism
students should go every day to school

30. Drug Usage at MIND is : more - 0 same - 13 less - 0

31. Comment on Drug Usage

not looked down as non-users
no more effect than elsewhere

found out harmful effects
8 = no effect

32. How different are Male-Female Relationships at MIND from other High Schools

9 = more open display of affection
1 = more promiscuous activity (petting and intercourse) at MIND
0 = more gay relationships
4 = same range and intensity as other schools.

Comments : bad language and manners and some teachers modelled it.

33. Comments on Male-Female Relationships and Influence on your Son/Daughter

4 = no effect
4 = good, easy going
very broadening
2 = positive

34. Consistency of School in applying its Rules and Regulations

2 = OK
2 = most inconsistent
only heard of one bad case
inconsistent

35. Consistency of Staff in enforcing Rules

teachers violators of smoking rules
complacement staff
inconsistent
OK

36. Familiarity between Staff and Students at MIND

too much stress on it
lack of trust
poor teachers posed as great pals
7 = good - positive
too much

37. - 38. Comments and Suggestions

"Glad my daughter went there, she met some very special people, students and staff. Maybe we need two MINDs - one for those who don't want to work and one for those who do and can."
"Daughter did three years in two, largely her reaction to sharp change in school atmosphere."
Teachers are using MIND - bring own kids, come late, don't fulfill contracts lazy and didn't prepare courses.
More dance, music, sports; teachers, parents and students all need more human relations.
Too much stress on internal community, need more academic learning.
Time to move location.
"My daughter liked it a lot."
More outreach, community activities.
Depressing shambles of a building. Total anarchy reigned at times.
Teachers need to be selected more carefully.

37. - 38. Comments and Suggestions - cont'd.

"We were more involved than otherwise and I learned a lot of respect . . .
for students who discovered and learned to cope with a lot of life problems."
"Son received the utmost personal satisfaction."
Longer classes starting in the morning are needed.

"Wouldn't want to go to college had he remained in public high school."
Opportunity for problem solving between staff and students.
"Pleased with development as student and human being."
"Interest and enthusiasm MIND generated in our daughter was terrific."
Discipline too lax.

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TEACHER INTERVIEWS - SUMMARY

All ten teachers presently related to the school were interviewed (following, in general, the teacher questionnaire prepared by the evaluation task force).

All but one teacher had been previously employed as a teacher and heard of MIND either through friends or from an advertisement for teachers placed in preparation for the opening of the school.

The teachers represent a great deal of experience mostly with the P.S.B.G.M. The teachers were seen as a very competent group who were quite dedicated to their work. The exceptions were teachers seen as "doing too much of their own thing" and letting down on academic standards.

Teachers typically came to MIND because it offered a challenge, a change from the stultifying nature of conventional schools and an opportunity to put "ideal" educational philosophies into practice.

Most agreed that working at MIND was very draining emotionally and tough physically (long hours) and this (the burnout syndrome) would be a major reason for leaving MIND.

Varying satisfaction was expressed as to how well MIND made use of the resources of the teacher being interviewed.

MIND was seen as making poor to very poor use of community resources :

"Just scratching the surface"
"We did use some resources but few now, nor much here at the Y"
"Community resources not used"
"Community resources used more than any other school"
"Students don't follow through on community projects and the community gets burned and doesn't want other students back."

MIND also made very little if any contribution to the community except by being an alternative school.

The type of students attending MIND was seen to have changed over the four years : from bright, responsible students to more of a cross section with a fair number of learning problems and poorly motivated students as well as some behavior problems.

Thus agreement was general - but not total - that there should be some selection of MIND students to at least reduce or eliminate students "not in harmony with MIND's goals and philosophy" or not ready to work and contribute something to the school. (While the interviews were being conducted the school - with teacher support - set up a screening process for 1979-80). The minority of teachers who did not favor selection felt the school's orientation was consistent with taking all students and that a cross section was beneficial.

All teachers agreed that MIND's teachers were as competent or more competent compared to others in the P.S.B.G.M. system.

The unique experiences offered by MIND were described as learning responsibility and problem solving methods, developing self direction in learning, enhancing personal growth, personal relationships and equality with teachers, and an opportunity to take or develop "oddball" courses and group study projects.

Although a few staff were satisfied with the academic learnings and achievements of students, most were not.

"I've been dragged down this year a[illegible] pushing for more academic program"
"I've given up on my demands for qual[illegible]."

The personal growth of students and th[illegible]eparation for the future was seen as much more satisfactory (but not by al[illegible] than the academic program. And most felt that students would have an easier time than conventional high school students in CEGEP and in getting jobs.

"They'll get jobs easier but may not keep them because of their independence and readiness to express themselves."

The permissiveness at MIND was seen as major feature of the school but many felt it had gone too far.

"It worked well with responsible students but with our new students it's a disaster."
Lack of consistency and structure a problem.
Lack of leadership and direction has created a problem for the school.

The timetable at MIND received mixed reactions with some feeling there was too much class time, others just right, and some that there was not enough class time.

Out of class time was, however, seen as not being fully utilized.

Drug usage and sexual relationships were seen as usual for any high school although many mentioned that MIND students were more open about their behavior and this brought drugs and sex into the open with healthy results.

The two week special group projects at MIND were seen as very valuable and well worth the cancelled class time.

The familiarity of staff with students was seen as a major strength of the school.

Staff were described generally as inconsistent in enforcing rules but this created a problem for some, while not for others.

While the co-management was seen as a major feature of MIND school, reactions to it were mixed.

A good feature but not working well.
"Approach good but everyone (students and parents) need training to make effective use of the process and power"
"Our relations with parents has gone downhill"
"Always the same few students participating".

The staff mentioned that the additional space and better physical set-up at the High School of Montreal could be a big shot in the arm in improving the effectiveness of the school.

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School Board and Related Community People
Interviews and Questionnaires Summary

Included in this sample are questionnaires from 3 high school principals (out of 12 contacted and sent questionnaires) 7 high school guidance counselors (out of 12 contacted and sent questionnaires), 2 community people (out of 20 contacted and sent questionnaires), the director of instructional services and interviews with the chairperson of the P.S.B.G.M., the director general of the P.S.B.G.M. and the regional director responsible for MIND school. The executive director of the YMCA where the school is located also contributed during an interview.

All of the P.S.B.G.M. people and all of the community people knew students who had been at MIND and most had heard of the school from other people. Six (of the 17) had visited the school and seven knew teachers working at MIND.

Students

MIND students were thought to be all types except slow learners. Expelled students or behavior problems were thought to be as common as self directed students.

80% of the respondents felt there should be student selection but only gave agreement on the criteria of eliminating students who would not make use of the school for learning experiences.

School and Community

Mixed responses. Disappointment over the school's relations with the community by those aware of its importance to the school's goals.

"Integration into the community is a fantasy as there is little student concern for others. (Regional Director)
"MIND makes little use of the Y and they are probably not familiar with the possibilities. MIND contributes nothing to the Y or the local community. It perhaps has a negative impact as the values in this ethnic oriented community are very different. MIND students are an affront here." (Y director).

Teachers at MIND

All agreed that MIND teachers had the same (or a bit more) competence than the average teacher at a conventional school.
"Teachers at MIND work much harder with their unstructured setting. They are dedicated and have good experience" (Director General).
"MIND teachers are dedicated. They would be an asset in the regular system" (Chairperson).

Teachers at MIND - cont'd.

"The teachers there are bright and have a cause. Some are odd balls and some are not well subject trained."(Regional Director)
"Teachers are competent but some are in over their heads (with school's lack of clear goals and structure)."(Y Director)
"Burn-out and disillusionment is setting in now." (Regional Director)
"Committed and willing to live up to that commitment." (Director of instructional services)

Student Achievement and Preparation

Almost all thought MIND students' academic learning, preparation for the future, and personal growth were average or above. And that they would have the same or an easier time in CEGEP or getting a job as other students.

Freedom at MIND

Mixed reactions. Most of the positive comments were qualified by "for the right student" or "if used properly". "Too much for many."
"Good for those who can handle it, otherwise a disaster."
"There needs to be clearer definition of limits and more consistency in handling limits. And the destructive students need someone to lean on them." (Y Director).
"Too much freedom can be a drawback and I question freedom as a goal." (Director General)
"Good for the bright and motivated but there were others who couldn't use the lack of structure." (Chairperson)
"Appropriate for some, but not all." (Instructional Services)

Drugs and Sex

13% thought drug usage at MIND was more than at a conventional school. No one thought there was more heterosexual or homosexual activity but 20% mentioned they thought affection was displayed more openly at the school.

MIND's Uniquenesses

Learning group decision making and developing self awareness were two major themes. Also mentioned were : independent study, developing initiative, freedom, equality with adults, community resources, and the cosmopolitan population of Park Avenue.

Comments on MIND's Future

Everyone agreed that the P.S.B.G.M. should continue sponsoring MIND as an alternative school.

"We always need an alternative."
"It's a valid experience in democracy."
"It's a great place for certain students."
"MIND is desperately needed for non-conformists."
"It's an exciting learning experience for bright students."
"It provides a viable alternative for those students who find the regular school not conducive to their growth and development."

Longer range comments on the future of the School included the following :

"I'd like to see MIND larger in size; more diversified, and open to more students." (Director General)
"There is a place for MIND now and in the future but the curriculum needs shaping up as well as some consistency in the structure." (Regional Director)
"The political ramifications are that parents and teachers will have to band together to fight for MIND in the provincial system, which is going back to basics - Latin, Math, English, and Moral and Religious instruction." (Director General)
"MIND could work much closer with the P.S.B.G.M. looking at what can be learned from the MIND experience and exploring how MIND could be an influence on the system regarding educational method." (Y Director)

The trend today is back to basics and this is counter to the movement that produced MIND. There is an emphasis on greater rigor and dropping enrollment . The temptation in consolidation is to cut frills (MIND) but the salvation of our system, I feel, is to go in the opposite direction and expand the experimentation and alternative programs. We need more dealing with individual differences." (Chairperson)

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STUDENT RESULTS

The following page summarizes the MIND students' results on the Quebec leaving courses. A comparative breakdown for each regular course offered by MIND is shown in the master assessment report, copies of which are on file at MIND school and with the Protestant School Board of Greater Montreal and the Island Council (Conseil Scolaire de l'Ile de Montreal).

Course results showing MIND students significantly surpassing the average of the other schools include :

Art	Computer Science 421
Drama	History 412 and 512
Biology	English Composition
French (oral)	English Literature

Course results of MIND students significantly below other schools average included

Computer Science 521	Math
Histoire 412 (in French)	

Drop-outs

Between September and February (1978-79) twenty-four students left MIND. Fifteen left voluntarily. Out of the twenty-four, twelve went to other high schools, and six took jobs.

Scheduled class time at MIND

Level 2	17.1 hours a day
	3.4 hours a day
Level 3	16.3 hours a week
	3.4 hours a day
Level 4	16.7 hours a week
	3.3 hours a day
Level 5	15.2 hours a week
	3.0 hours a day

These figures do not include the group projects (860-01, 860-02) which do not have formal classes.

QUEBEC HIGH SCHOOL LEAVING CERTIFICATE
RESULTS ANALYSIS

YEAR	NUMBER WRITING EXAMS		NUMBER SUCCESSFUL		PERCENTAGE SUCCESSFUL	
	M.I.N.D.	P.S.B.G.M.	M.I.N.D.	P.S.B.G.M.	M.I.N.D.	P.S.B.G.M.
1976	37	4319	22	2714	59	63
1977	40	4109	27	2597	68	63
1978	23	3983	13	2808	57	70
TOTALS/ AVERAGES	100	12411	62	8119	62	65

M.I.N.D.'s RANKING OUT OF 21 P.S.B.G.M. SCHOOLS

1976 M.I.N.D. was 14th (highest percentage of matriculation completions) out of 21

1977 M.I.N.D. was 8.5th (highest percentage of matriculation completions) out of 21

1978 M.I.N.D. was 19th (highest percentage of matriculation completions) out of 21

Three year average : 13th out of 21.

(Twelve schools did better, eight schools did more poorly)

*The reason for this unusually sharpe rise in.school board average of four thousand students is still under discussion. (See next page for comparisons of actual classes in 1978.)

Matriculation Exam Comparisons - 1978

History 412 (Required of all graduating students in the system)

	No.writing	No.successful	%	average mark
MIND	24	24	100	63
PSBGM	3056	2478	81	60

Biology 412

	No.writing	No.successfull	%	average mark
MIND	35	35	100	71
PSBGM	1006	838	83	64

Mathematics 422

	No.writing	No.successfull	%	average mark
MIND	46	31	67	53
PSBGM	2934	2251	77	62

English 422 (Literature)

	No.writing	No.successfull	%	average mark
MIND	35	32	91	69
PSBGM	3041	2617	86	63

French 422 (written)

	No.writing	No.successfull	%	average mark
MIND	35	29	83	63
PSBGM	2742	2417	88	65

(These courses were selected on the basis of the largest number of MIND students writing the exam.)

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ANAYLSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF MIND EVALUATION STUDY RESULTS

Who goes to MIND ?

Students go to MIND from almost all of the other twenty-four regular high schools of the P.S.B.G.M.

In the first two years of the school's operation it appears that most students filled the self-directed and rather bright category. In the past year more average, misfits and students escaping hard work seem to be attending (this is substantiated by the higher academic performance of graduates in 1976 and '77).

Most students come from homes where parents have a relatively high education level and likely a relatively high socio-economic level (over half of the parents - and two thirds of the repondents are women - have some college or university education - over a third have university degrees and over a fifth have post graduate work or degrees).

It appears that relatively few students come from the inner city or represent new Canadian ethnic groups. An informal estimate sees well over a quarter of the students as Jewish and very few students of French origin.

Why do they go ?

About half of the students were doing quite well in their conventional high school before coming to MIND and were either attracted by the self-directed and co-management features of MIND or were bored in their present program. The other half appear to be average students, misfits or students who didn't like school, or for personal or other reasons were not getting along well in school. As mentioned above, an increasing number of students are coming who are not interested in education, collaborating in decision making or school projects, or being a responsible, interdependent member of a community.

Who are the Staff ?

The teachers at MIND are quite competent, experienced teachers who are "dedicated" to the philosophy of the alternative school MIND. They were above average in their success as teachers before coming to MIND and would be welcome back into conventional schools at any time.

MIND appears to be a very demanding experience emotionally and there is a concern that teachers may "burn out" or become disillusioned after two or three years.

Staff appear to be very informal, flexible people who are as interested in personal growth as giving lectures to disseminate information and who are prepared to share control of the educational program with students and parents.

What is the School's Reputation ?

MIND is regarded very highly as an alternative school by all who have had some direct contact with it. Friends of students and parents who do not know about the school have mixed reactions with some being intrigued with its program and others being critical or thinking it's a place for drop-outs or dummies. Especially important is the favorable image the school has with parents and the P.S.B.G.M. (principals, guidance counselors and senior school board personnel).

Parents are generally delighted to have their student at MIND and less than 10% of the parents reported wishing his/her student were at a conventional high school.

Academic Achievement and CEGEP Success.

The matriculation results for MIND students during its first two years were almost average (11th out of 21 schools) but in its third year it slipped. Considering that (a) most students were doing fairly well on coming to MIND, (b) they came from relatively well educated homes (c), and that they have considerable stimulation and a competent teaching staff the results in the third year are disappointing to some people. However, in the third year MIND teachers agreed to concentrate more on personal development.

Students, former students, parents, staff and school board personnel were only fairly satisfied with academic achievement at MIND.

However, there was quite a common agreement that MIND students had an easier time succeeding in CEGEP than graduates of a conventional high school. Less than 30% of the former students reported that MIND graduates had a harder time in CEGEP.

Personal and Social Growth.

Likely the most outstanding feature of MIND is the personal and social growth students are reported to attain. The 'school as a community' focus along with the co-management activities and self-directed study seem to combine with the friendly, personal attention of teachers (small school size and small class size) to provide unusual opportunities for developing responsibility, self confidence, and a strong sense of personal identity. MIND is well recognized for this feature and staff, in setting school objectives, have given it equal footing with academic achievement.

Jobs and Preparation for the Future.

Students, former students and others thought that getting a job would be a bit easier for MIND students. Some felt that keeping a job might be more difficult as MIND students were noted for their independence and assertive articulation of their wants. There was a much stronger picture that MIND students were well prepared for the future and this was well supported by the former students.

Is it a viable Alternative High School ?

There is strong agreement from all quarters that MIND is a very viable alternative high school and important for the P.S.B.G.M. to have as part of its system. There is some feeling that MIND should be clearer about the students it is prepared to recruit and accept.

The two major drawbacks to MIND that surfaced more from hearsay than in reality were that MIND was an expensive school to support at a time of shrinking budgets; and that MIND took students from other high schools which increased in importance as school population started to shrink significantly last year. MIND's only "additional" expense as a school was the rental of its facilities (although all schools have a facility cost) but with a planned move to the High School of Montreal in the fall of 1979 it will be on an equal footing with all the other high schools. The concern of MIND depleting a conventional school's enrollment remains. This concern is balanced by the spread of MIND's population over almost all of the P.S.B.G.M. schools. The maximum "loss" was ten students from Westmount High and some of these may have left in any case.

Summary of the Evaluation of Special Program Features

(1) Co-Management - this feature was rarely mentioned by a student as one of the strengths of the school and it was low on the list of educational experiences students were having that were not available at conventional high schools. The co-management meetings were listed as the second major weakness at MIND. Parents, while they mentioned this as an important feature, were not enthusiastic about it. Teachers and school board people also mentioned it as one of several features.

Satisfaction with student centered, co-management approach.

	dis-satisfied	OK	satisfied
Former students	20%	44%	36%
Parents	21%	39%	40%
Parents of former students	33%	40%	27%

Summary : OK (but difficult to gain enthusiasm around)

(2) Teacher-Student Relations - the descriptions of the teachers by the students were very positive and the friendly relationships were described as the second major strength of MIND and the second most important educational experience not available at conventional schools. Parents say this is a very important feature and made almost totally positive comments about the quality of the relationships. Teachers joined this positive view but it was mentioned less frequently by school board personnel.

Summary : working very well, excellent.

(3) Self-directed Study - this was the most attractive and desirable feature of MIND coming out of the students' questionnaires. This was seen as an important component by teachers and of medium high importance to parents and school board personnel. While there are some problems coming out of the self-directed feature (mentioned below) it is a very important dimension - probably the closest to what the school is all about - and appears to be seen by all related to MIND as its greatest strength as an alternative school.

Summary : top of the list and working quite well.

(4) Freedom at MIND - considered by all to be an important feature and a significant area in which the school is unique, it also received mixed reactions from everyone about how it worked out. It was the major area of parent dissatisfaction and the second highest area of student dissatisfaction and school board people often said "good for some but not for all". Many respondents mentioned that a fair number of students were taking advantage of the freedom and not developing a responsible attitude to the community (school) or the use of their free time.

Perception of the freedom and permissiveness at MIND.

	too much	OK	too little
Students	15%		56%
Former students	30%		9%
Parents	68%	26%	6%
Parents of former students	62%	38%	

Summary : an important feature but getting mixed reactions.

(5) Class Timetable (shorter, more flexible) - all the students reported satisfaction with the flexible timetable and almost all liked the reduced class hours. However, for the parents both were a major area of discontent. Much of the discontent was related to the students not using the extra time suitably.

Satisfaction with the flexible timetable.

	dis-satisfied	OK	satisfied
Former students		14%	86%
Parents	8%	24%	68%
Parents of former students	21%	53%	26%

Satisfaction with the reduced school (class) time.

	dis-satisfied	OK	satisfied
Students	6%	17%	77%
Former students	4%	23%	73%
Parents	31%	33%	36%
Parents of former students	50%	43%	7%

Summary : going pretty well but could be checked out further.

(6) Special Group Projects - received quite favorable responses from students and teachers, and rather favorable responses from parents. School board people saw the group projects and special individual projects as a strong asset of MIND.

Summary : a solid feature of the program.

(7) Community Orientation (geographic 1) - generally MIND makes little use of the outside community. Only four students are reported to be taking courses outside.

Summary : a very weak area.

(8) Location and Size - the size of the school is an important dimension to MIND's sense of community and school spirit. The small class size (60% are 15 or less) contributes to the individual attention and sense of identity the students feel (and this is seen as a significant feature). The location has been a mixed blessing but with a move forthcoming in the fall it will be important to monitor its impact.

Summary : size is a winner and location is changing.

(9) Parent Involvement - parents are strongly supportive of MIND and are quite happy their youths are there. Quite a number of parents feel MIND may have contributed to their becoming closer to their son/daughter. While half of the parents report not having attended a school meeting or participating in other school activities, half have attended one or more meetings and a fifth have worked on task forces or with students. Staff are aware that they could be making better use of parent resources. And, as mentioned in (1), parents have a mixed reaction to co-management meetings.

Summary : worth exploring further as some good things are happening.

NEXT STEPS IN PLANNING

Nine areas for further planning at MIND school arise from the data collected in this assessment study. These areas for further planning are typical of the usual "Recommendations" section of an evaluation study yet they are the evaluation task force's perspective of the data and there is, consequently, some ownership of the planning by students, parents and staff.

1. It is an appropriate time now for MIND to reflect on its four years of experience and clarify its goals and objectives. It would be helpful if these could be stated in rather specific measurable terms and clarify the school's priorities.

2. It is important to have a student body who will benefit from the program of this alternative school. To this end, an aggressive community education and student recruitment program would likely increase the number of suitable applicants. And, continued refinement of the student screening (or selecting) process would increase the "goodness of fit" between the students' reasons for being at MIND and the objectives of the school.

3. MIND is now in a good position to use its fairly extensive alternative school experience in interpreting innovative education to the P.S.B.G.M. system. It could help the school board assess the need for additional types of alternative or experimental programs and as part of this goal establish some long term research on the impact of MIND's program on its students, parents and staff.

4. Following the clarification of MIND's goals (or restatement) and priorities a task force should check out the present level of academic accomplishment and clarify if it is at an optimal level for this kind of an alternative school. If not, the task force could give leadership to a revision of the academic program and thrust of the school.

5. In view of the important role of co-management (democratic decision making) in the school's program further time would be well spent in improving the group decision making procedures. This could take the form of training for students, parents and staff as well as some specific group process coaching at community meetings. Such activities could increase the effectiveness of the meetings and raise the satisfaction level of the participants thus giving a boost to the co-management program.

Next Steps in Planning - cont'd.

6. The clarification of MIND's goals should clarify the priority of using outside resources in the program and if it is a high priority additional staff time will be needed to initiate activity here and turn around this lagging component.

7. MIND is doing some very solid and exciting work with its parents' group and further benefits could likely be gained by some fine tuning of the parent involvement program. A task force appears to be the preferred method of working on this area.

8. A review should be made of students use of unscheduled (free) time with a view to providing viable, worthwhile, and attractive options for its use. And, depending on the outcome of 1 and 2 above, if students join the MIND program who are not responsible and self-directed then an educational unit should be considered to teach those skills and attitudes.

9. The relocation of MIND to the High School of Montreal building may have a profound affect on its atmosphere, morale and program. Relocation (physical and perhaps psychological) of the school more into the main stream of the P.S.B.G.M. system also enhances MIND's opportunity to disseminate information on approaches to innovative education and have more influence on the system as a model of an alternative school. It appears helpful to monitor this change thoughtfully and systematically.

CONSULTANT'S COMMENTS

The MIND evaluation task force stressed that it would be very important for me, as the external consultant on the evaluation study, to express my objective views of the school in the study report. During the four months of evaluation activities I interviewed quite a number of students, parents, teachers, and school board personnel about the school. In these interviews I tried to establish the repondent's related background from which he or she viewed the school (their bias) and his/her opinions about what the school was and should be doing. Let me now conduct this kind of an interview with myself.

Tell me about your Background that is related to this Study of an Alternative School.

Well, I got an early start as my first position was as the resident master of the first residential school for handicapped youth in Canada. It was considered quite an innovation in those days and pioneered a number of community oriented activities. I was also the first graduate from an innovative doctoral program in group psychology from Columbia University. At Sir George (Concordia University) the department that I set up has been the most innovative, pioneering alternatives to final examinations, off campus courses, and flexible timetables for classes all of which are completely accepted by the University today. Our Centre (for Human Relations and Community Studies) also started a new trend in the University and was the first of its kind in Canada. Most of the eighteen research projects that I have directed have also been related to change and innovation or training the people to give leadership to these programs.

So, what is your Bias towards Alternative Schools ?

As a consultant I've worked with fifteen Universities who would be considered pretty conventional, at least the same number of colleges who would be somewhat more innovative, and quite a number of schools and school boards. I've worked on three innovative projects in high schools and have been a field faculty for Goddard College, one of early alternative schools, for a number of years. I think I'm pretty comfortable in looking at both the weaknesses and strengths of alternative programs.

What would you do differently if you had a Chance to run MIND School ?

MIND is working very well as an alternative school and I can see only a couple of things I'd want to work on right away. One would be the "togetherness" and morale of the MIND staff team. I think some work on clarifying the school goals and priorities and integrating the team in the process would pay rich dividends.

Consultant's Comments - cont'd.

The other would be defining and organizing "freedom" in more functional terms. Freedom to me is not to be confused with sitting around and having a lot of free time. Freedom is having the ability and opportunity to make informed decisions among a number of options. And it includes having to take responsibility for your decisions. This concept of accountability is often overlooked in progressive movements. This means that there is no conflict to me between structure and freedom, in fact it is the structure which in many cases provides the freedom. I would work at implementing number 8 of the next steps in planning.

I guess, too, I don't see MIND as that radical a departure from the conventional P.S.B.G.M. school. Many of its special features exist in other schools and I think it could move more to the cutting edge of innovative education. For example, students and teachers could create their own credit courses (as they have done for some time in Manitoba), students could really plug into educational activities in the community, and the school could give leadership to community projects and special events for the conventional high schools. Our experience has been that for the community projects approach to succeed you need a staff who spend a fair amount of time in the community opening up possibilities and supervising follow through.

Would you select Students ?

Yes, I'd set up a screening or selection process but it might be a carefully planned self selection system. Many years ago Sir George pioneered taking almost any mature student into University including those who were far from completing high school. But they monitored the students carefully and those who were "doing nothing and going nowhere" didn't stay long. I think the program was a great success both personally and academically. Selection doesn't mean that only special or elite students would be admitted. It might be decided that there should be a cross section of students and selection could be on that basis. But it is important that the school knows and articulates who it is in business for and then selects on that basis.

What about the Concern many have expressed about MIND's low Academic Achievement ?

To me that is a non question. The real question is what are the goals of MIND. If it is not in business to provide conventional academic programs then it does not make much sense to compare them with other schools on this conventional criteria. They should be evaluated on the basis of their own alternative school goals. Who would compare the batting and fielding records of a sandlot baseball team with the National league teams - they are all baseball teams but are in business for very different reasons.

Consultant's Comments - cont'd.

I noticed an Area in your Data Collection about Drugs and Sex at MIND, what was that all about ?

It has been my experience that some people have a feeling that most progressive educational programs are operated by and for druggies who practice free love and I wanted to check this out in relation to MIND. We found that almost all respondents believed drug usage to be the same or less compared to conventional high schools and felt the male-female relationships were, if anything, more open, mature and wholesome than elsewhere. It was good to see that there were not rumors or hunches in this area that could bias people's view of the school unfairly.

What did you find were the most impressive Features of MIND ?

Well, I've been in a lot of schools over the past twenty-five years and have found one of the most reliable methods for assessing a school's climate and approach to education is observing informal activity in the school halls and public places such as the cafeteria. At MIND I was most impressed with the friendly, informal atmosphere - with the fun students were having at school. Students were very open with me and interested in what I was doing at the school. They made a special (by my standards but I assume usual for them) effort to interact with me. This was significantly different from other schools including our own "people oriented" department at Concordia.

We talk a lot about teaching people how to learn and to enjoy the learning process. MIND is certainly outstanding in this area.

Where would you like to see MIND go in the Future ?

MIND, with very few modifications, could become a model and interpreter of affective (confluent) education for the P.S.B.G.M. system. Neill in his radical approach to education Summerhill claimed that affective learning was even more important than cognitive acquisition. Knowledge or information by itself is only part of a comprehensive educational program and needs the feeling and attitude oriented components to complete it. Students deserve to be taught what to do with their feelings as much as they deserve to be taught what to do with their knowledge. And, it is likely that they are unable to utilize their knowledge until they have the feeling and attitude capacity to integrate it and act upon it.

And MIND could continue to push forward on the traditional progressive education fronts of learning by doing, living in the here and now rather than preparing for the future, and teaching independent or self-directed learning skills.

Thanks for the opportunity to share these ideas with you.